



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: History Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Castleknock Community College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Carpenterstown Road Castleknock Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	76062B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22 and 23-11-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	01/02/2023

What is a subject inspection?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated learning and teaching in History under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	22 and 23-11-2022
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents.• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and History teachers.• Interaction with students, including focus groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during six lessons.• Examination of students' work and journals.• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and History teachers.

School context

Castleknock Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of the County Dublin and Dún Laoghaire, Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 1,236 students and offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, and the established Leaving Certificate.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good, with instances of very good practice noted in a few lessons.
- All teachers displayed excellent subject knowledge and classroom management skills.
- In a few highly effective lessons, the teachers' high expectations of student learning, was supported by the provision of success criteria for all activities.
- In all lessons, teachers used the school's digital learning platform to enhance the learning experience of all students.
- In more than half of the lessons, there was limited evidence of teachers' written strategies to improve student learning.
- There was evidence of very good communication between the history department and school management.

Recommendations

- Teachers should use success criteria as a means of explaining how best to attain the learning intentions to students.
- The school's digital learning platform should be used to capture and consolidate key learning achieved from classroom activities.
- Front ending of assessment is recommended in lessons to ensure all classroom tasks and homework exercises support the formative assessment of the learning intentions.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good, with highly effective practice observed in a few lessons. Teachers demonstrated a very high level of pedagogical knowledge, competency and skill in their subject area. Exemplary classroom management was observed in all lessons.
- In-line with effective practice, all teachers provided students with learning intentions and used effective questioning and exit strategies to assess and affirm levels of attainment. In a few highly effective lessons, teachers provided success criteria as the method to attain the learning intentions. This is very good practice as it builds students' capacity to attain the intentions for the lessons.
- All teachers placed a strong emphasis on the development of students' literacy skills in

relation to historical terms. This emphasis, noted in planning documents, was demonstrated by all teachers through the identification of key words. Encouraging students to develop their own word bank to apply meanings to key terms, and to record them, would enhance the students' ability to take responsibility for their learning.

- In a few highly effective lessons teachers tailored lesson content and activities to meet the needs of all learners. In these instances, teachers differentiated content, set extension tasks and provided various learning prompts. This highly effective practice should be extended.
- In all lessons, teachers used the school's digital learning platform to enhance the learning experience of all students. Students that took part in the student focus group held as part of the inspection, were very positive about the use of digital learning technologies (DLT) in classroom practice. To align DLT with the learning process, teachers should use the school's digital learning platform as a means of capturing and consolidating the key learning achieved from classroom activities. This would serve as an online learning bank for students to revisit outside of the classroom.
- The overall quality of assessment was satisfactory. Some appropriate formative assessment strategies were evident during the correction of homework, including teacher questioning, peer-assessment and retrieval exercises. In more than half of the lessons, there was limited evidence of students' taking ownership for correcting their mistakes or improving their answers.
- In a few highly effective lessons, teachers monitored students' homework, through very effective circulation during the lessons. This enabled teachers to formatively assess individual learners' needs and plan future lessons. It also supported the students' capacity to seek support in improving their learning. Teachers should further develop formative assessment strategies to support the students' capacity to reflect on their learning.
- An analysis of students' copybooks, in the majority of lessons, showed limited evidence of regular subject specific written feedback. However very good feedback to improve student learning was observed in a few highly effective lessons. In these lessons, written subject specific feedback, framed by success criteria, was provided to students on a regular basis to improve their learning, using the acronym EBI (even better if). All teachers are advised to provide clear written formative feedback to students.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good. School management was very supportive of the subject and an appropriate time allocation was provided across junior and senior cycle. Option bands were based on student choice.
- School leadership was very supportive of continuing professional development (CPD) for history teachers and all history teachers have attended all recent CPD for Junior Cycle History.
- Commendably, school leadership also encouraged and facilitated teachers to attend further CPD outside of their subject specific areas. This very good practice promotes the capacity of all history teachers to extend their teaching practices to improve learners' outcomes. Following the CPD, teachers shared their learning at staff events. This good practice builds the whole-school's capacity to improve teaching and learning.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of department planning was satisfactory.
- The position of subject coordinator was rotated within the department.
- Collaboration was good across the History department, with regular formal and informal meetings held to discuss relevant matters.
- There was evidence of good support for planning and communication between the History department and school management. All department meetings were informed by matters arising within the department and the school's SSE targets. These targets included monthly wellbeing goals and plans to improve digital literacy to enhance learning.
- Appropriate planning was present for junior and senior cycle History. To further enhance the effectiveness of this planning at junior cycle, teachers should plan units of learning collaboratively.

- The uptake of History at senior level is low. An additional History module was introduced at TY to support the uptake at senior cycle. Building on these measures, it is advisable that an action plan is collectively agreed and implemented, to increase students' interest and enthusiasm for History.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <i>outstanding</i> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	<i>Good</i> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	<i>Fair</i> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	<i>Weak</i> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Castleknock Community College welcomes the many positive observations recorded during this recent inspections.

The Board welcomes the positives affirmation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the very high level of teachers' pedagogical knowledge, competence, and skill along with exemplary classroom management and supportive environment that was observed in all lessons.

The Board further acknowledges the positive affirmation on the quality of planning, preparation, and collaboration across the History Department.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board of Management supports the History Department in addressing the recommendations made in this Inspection Report. School provision for History will continue to be of the highest standard as acknowledged in the Report.

The history Department will continue to work collaboratively, by sharing good practices and by engaging in on-going curricular planning. The Department plans to build on good practice that is evident in their Junior Cycle planning to review and develop Transition Year and Senior Cycle.

The Report's recommendations will inform teaching and learning and on-going planning in the Department. With regard to the recommendations, the History Department is committed to reviewing their formative assessment strategies as part of their SSE planning.